



August 10, 1999

**DRAFT**

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Mr. Kirk Rodgers  
Regional Director  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Mr. Mike Spear  
Regional Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
2233 Watt Avenue Suite 120  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Kirk and Mike:

As your agencies develop the detailed execution budget for the FY 2000 CVPIA work program, I thought it appropriate to provide some preliminary comments on the topic of priorities. The Restoration Fund Roundtable is scheduled to be briefed on the 2000 program on September 15th. A more detailed comment letter will follow that presentation.

As we have previously stated (see attached letters of July 10th and November 13th of last year), the CVPWA requests that you reevaluate your expenditure priorities and make sure that those environmental programs that are directly related to the construction and operation of the CVP receive top priority consideration.

With the advent of CALFED ecoinvestment funds, through comprehensive coordination, you have the ability to ensure the highest priority projects in the Central Valley will be covered. Use of CVP customer dollars to front non-CVP projects is no longer justified. Non-CVP related projects should not be prioritized over CVP related projects when allocating funds collected from CVP customers (or funds appropriated by Congress for CVP purposes).

While our previous letters on this matter have gone unanswered, we have to believe you can see the logic of such prioritization. In some cases, where there is clear and significant biological benefit, we will remain supportive of investing in non-CVP problems and programs. In 2000 and beyond however, we will actively oppose investments for which there is not clear, measurable biological improvements and/or for which there is no clear linkage to the construction and operation of the Central Valley Project.

Of course, there would be no need to prioritize if you had "all the money in the world", but you don't. And while you do have A LOT to spend, roughly \$70 million in FY 2000, there are a number of valuable projects and programs directly related to the CVP that I fear will go wanting.

1521 "I" Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-448-1638  
fax 916-446-1063

Here is a list of programs/projects that deserve priority consideration:

- Trinity River Restoration
- Clear Creek Restoration
- Battle Creek Restoration
- San Joaquin River Riparian Project
- Fish Screens at Coleman National Fish Hatchery
- Fish Screens on other CVP related Diversions
- Fish Passage at Red Bluff Diversion Dam
- SB1086 Program (genesis of CVPIA)
- Endangered Species Act Recovery Plans (CVP portions)
- Fish Screens at Tracy Pumping Plant
- State Water Project Transport of Refuge Water Supplies
- Silver Creek Water Management

The attached letters contain a number of program and policy concerns which remain unaddressed. The comments remain valid. There are three issues that I must reinforce:

1. DOI needs to develop a formal program for accountably acquiring and allocating environmental water and to improve the reliability of CVP water operations. CVPIA authorities (for environmental water acquisition and balanced project operations) can and should be utilized in the development of the Environmental Water Account with CALFED.
2. DOI needs to develop a clear and public process for the receipt and consideration of unsolicited proposals for CVPIA funds.
3. DOI needs to demonstrate substantive coordination/integration with CALFED in all ways: programmatically, biologically, and fiscally. We need common goals identified and common biological indicators of success.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Jason Peltier  
Manager